

Tribute in Stone Honors Devotion to Wild Flower Garden at Wirth

By **BOB YLVIKAKER**
 Minneapolis Tribune
 Staff Writer

A bench of native Mankato, Minn., dolomite stone has been placed in Eloise Butler Wild Flower garden in Theodore Wirth park as a memorial to the late Clinton M. Odell, former chairman of the board of Burma-Vita Co. and a benefactor of the garden.

The bench stands on a high hilltop in the upland garden section of the reserve. It commands a view stretching all the way to downtown Minneapolis in one direction and to the Kenwood tower in another.

Odell, who died in 1958, "put a good deal of his personal fortune and a lot of toil into the garden," according to Mrs. Carroll Binder, president of the Friends of the Wild Flower Garden.

"HE WAS OUT there digging and weeding on week-ends when other people were playing golf," she said.

He founded the Friends of the Wild Flower Garden five years ago. Now numbering over 200 members, it supplies funds to supplement park board allocations for the garden.

Mrs. Martha Crone, former garden curator, purchased the memorial bench from funds contributed by friends of Odell. The upland garden section is a tract east of the original woodland area and was added to the reserve in 1944, mainly through Odell's assistance.

THE PRAIRIE and upland plants in this newer section flourish in midsummer, when the spring flowers have gone and the shade of the woodland is so dense that few plants bloom there, Mrs. Crone said.

The Butler Wild Life garden dates back to 1907, when it was established in response to difficulties experienced by Minneapolis botany teachers in finding a place to take their students for field trips.

Teachers donated their time to care for the garden until 1911 when one of them, Eloise Butler of Central high, upon retiring from the class-



MRS. CARROLL BINDER, MRS. MARTHA CRONE, MRS. CLINTON ODELL

Bench donated in memory of Clinton Odell

room, was hired as fulltime curator. She served until her death in 1933, four years after the garden had been named in her honor.

Miss Butler's longtime associate, Mrs. Crone, succeeded her as curator and continued in that post until retiring this year.

SHE HAS BEEN succeeded by Kenneth Avery, a landscape design graduate of the University of Minnesota.

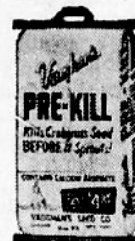
Originally a three-acre tract, the garden now covers 13 acres of glen, swamp and hills. It contains over 1,000 species, both plants native to Minnesota and representatives of other states.

The garden has had its ups and downs. Storms in 1926 and 1927 left great destruction. During the drouth of 1934 and 1935, a large percentage of plants disappeared, making an almost complete re-establishment necessary in succeeding years.

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